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*Philadelphia; The Place and The People.* By AGNES REPPLIER.  
(New York: The Macmillan Company. 1899. Pp. xv, 392.)

EXPLAINING in a literary journal why she wrote this volume, Miss Repplier said, with a candor equalling her brevity, "because the publishers gave me the work to do." No doubt the mandate of a publisher is something like the invitation of the Queen, and yet we must hesitate to affirm that it is the most adequate and satisfactory *raison d'être* for historical work. For if the Muse of History be not so jealous a mistress as she of the Law is proverbially alleged to be, she still is not without her exacting views as to the nature of a preparation for service in her train.

This book is not, however, in the strict sense a history, and the title-page, it will be observed, does not so designate it. Miss Repplier, whose success as an essayist is well known, has made for us an extended essay—not a study—upon the experiences and qualities of those people who lived, or who persist in living, on the site selected by Penn's Commissioners in 1681 for his city on the Delaware. Her purpose, well fulfilled, is to make a readable volume, and she has applied a light and graceful touch—sometimes disclosing the firmness beneath—to her work. Her vein of humor, with a dash of satire, "carries off" episodes and situations over which a more laborious writer might easily tire us. Her introductory chapter is itself an essay—something like the sketch in miniature which the etcher places at the bottom of his picture—and discusses the general character of Philadelphia. "Every community," Miss Repplier says, "like every man, carries to old age the traditions of its childhood, the inheritance derived from those who bade it live. And Philadelphia . . . still bears in her tranquil streets the impress of the Founder's touch. Simplicity, dignity, reserve, characterize her now, as in Colonial days. . . . To those who by right of heritage call themselves her sons, and even such step-children as are, by nature or grace, attuned to the chill tranquillity of their foster-mother, Philadelphia has a subtle charm that endures. . . . In the restful atmosphere of her sincere indifference, men and women gain clearness of perspective, and the saving grace of modesty. . . . More impetuous towns speed like meteors on their paths . . . but the Quaker City sees them rush by without envy, without ambition, without distaste, without emotions of any kind."

The chronological order of events is observed, but not closely followed, and as certain themes are presented, the "birth of Learning," the formation of the Philosophical Society, the founding and growth of the College and University, the establishment of the Hospital, the trials and tribulations of the drama, the rise of the dancing assemblies, in general the social conditions at different periods—these are treated topically, and carried beyond the immediate time of the narrative. It is in these that we find Miss Repplier—as indeed we should expect—to please us best; her art of dealing with phases of life and aspects of society is always past denial. The book may thus be said to refer to cults and conditions more than to persons and events. Indeed there are relatively few persons who

appear, and if there were an index—as unhappily there is not—it would present but a thin list of individualized figures. Franklin's name occurs often, and he receives the high consideration that can never be denied him, while William Penn is always kindly and respectfully treated. The book is dedicated to his memory, and in the introduction it is said that while Philadelphia owes a debt of gratitude to the many hands that have labored in its behalf, “deepest of all is her debt to Penn, who knew her little, but who loved her well”—an antithesis which in its primary member might perhaps be challenged, for Penn no doubt knew Philadelphia very well, as long as he had the mind left to know much of anything.

To hunt for errors of statement in so debonair a volume would be ungracious, if not indecent. A wicked misprint (p. 3) makes Thomas Fox out of Thomas Loe, the preacher who converted William Penn to Quakerism. Alexander Graydon, he of the *Memoirs*, is called “Dr.” Graydon repeatedly, though he was innocent of such a degree, in medicine, divinity or otherwise. Hannah Penn is said (p. 57) to have had three sons; she had a fourth likewise, Dennis, who nearly reached manhood. We are told (p. 57) that “his scapegrace son William” accompanied the Founder on his second visit to Pennsylvania, in 1699, and that when the latter returned, 1701, he “was left in the colony,” both these statements being in error. Young William came over—with that cranky youth Governor Evans—in 1704, and returned to England the same year. It is said (p. 65) that the proprietary rights in Pennsylvania passed on Penn's death “to his widow, for the worthless son did not long survive his father,” this being wrong in one particular and misleading in another; William did not inherit the proprietary rights, nor did the widow—they went to her sons, who after Dennis's death were three, John, Thomas, and Richard. It is said (p. 54) that after the Revolution “of 1689” in England, Penn “was promptly deprived of his proprietary rights.” As the appointment of Col. Fletcher (by which Penn was deprived of his power of government), occurred in October, 1692, nearly four years after William put James out of England, this can hardly be called “promptly,” and a similar remark, though reversed in form, might be made concerning the statement that “after years of trouble and disrepute” the government was restored to Penn; really the suspension of his authority lasted some twenty-two months.

There are some good illustrations in the book, by E. C. Peixoto, and some that are so exceedingly “sketchy” as to be of no service in such a work. A fine example of the latter is “A Site for a Fair City,” which appears to be an “impressionist” view of a spring freshet on some inland creek. The legends under the illustrations are in several cases quite inappropriate.

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